



Thomas Jefferson

~ Lover of Liberty ~

A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for ^{one} people to
~~dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to~~
~~assume among the powers of the earth the position~~ ^{superior and equal} station to
which the laws of nature & of nature's god entitle them a decent respect
to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes
which impel them to ~~the~~ ^{the} separation.

We hold these truths to be ~~self-evident~~ ^{self-evident}, that all men are
created equal & independent that ~~they are endowed by their creator with~~ ^{they are endowed by their creator with} certain
~~unalienable rights~~ ^{unalienable rights} that among ~~these are~~ ^{these are} life, liberty & the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these ~~rights~~ ^{rights}, go-
vernments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from
the consent of the governed that whenever any form of government
~~shall~~ becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter
or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying its foundation on
such principles & organizing it's powers in such form, as to them shall
seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness. prudence indeed
will debate that governments long established should not be ~~changed~~ ^{changed} for
light & transient causes and accordingly all experiences hath shewn that
mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to
right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. but
when a long train of abuses & usurpations [begun at a distinguished period,
& pursuing invariably, the same object, evinces a design to ~~reduce~~ ^{reduce}
them ~~to absolute despotism~~ ^{to absolute despotism}, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such
government & to provide new guards for their future security. such has
been the patient sufferance of these colonies, & such is now the necessity
which constrains them to ~~alter~~ ^{alter} their former systems of government.
the history of ~~the present~~ ^{the present} ~~is a history of~~ ^{is a history of} ~~unmitigated~~ ^{unmitigated} injuries and
usurpations, among which, ~~as a solitary fact~~ ^{as a solitary fact} to contra-
dict the uniform tenor of the rest, ~~it is a fact~~ ^{it is a fact} in direct object the
establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states to prove this, let fact be
submitted to a candid world, for the truth of which we pledge a faith
not swayed by falsehood!

Facsimile of Jefferson's original draft of the
Declaration of Independence, showing the changes made by
Benjamin Franklin and John Adams

THOMAS JEFFERSON

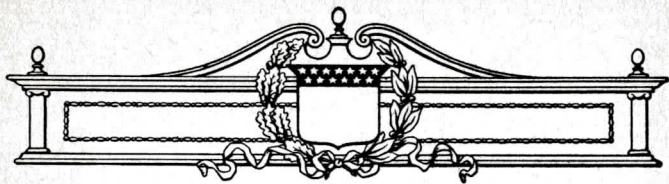
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"He hated tyranny; he loved truth; he was not afraid of man."

THOMAS JEFFERSON, the first great scholar in American politics, the author of the *Declaration of Independence*, of the statute for religious freedom in Virginia, and the third President of the United States, was among the first of our statesmen who held these truths to be self-evident:—"That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." First, last, and always, Jefferson believed in *the people*. To the end of his days he had sublime faith in human nature. "It is my conviction," he wrote, "that should things go wrong at any time, *the people* will set them to rights by the peaceable exercise of their elective rights." No man ever despised tyranny more thoroughly, or loved freedom more unrelentingly than this great noble-hearted patriot.

A SON OF "OLD VIRGINIE"

AT his father's home, "Shadwell," in Virginia, near where the River Rivanna enters the James, Thomas Jefferson was born April 13, 1743, the third in a family

of eight children. His father, Peter Jefferson, a planter with nineteen hundred acres of land and thirty slaves, was a hardy frontiersman; his mother, Jane Randolph, was of aristocratic blood and gentle bearing.

OFF TO SCHOOL

AT the age of five, Thomas started his schooling; and at nine he entered the school of Reverend William Douglas, a Scotch clergyman, where he began the study of Latin, Greek, and French.

At seventeen, three years after his father's death, Thomas entered William and Mary College at Williamsburg. He was then a shy, tall, slight young man, eager for information. He inherited his father's great strength of body and mind, a capacity for labor, self-reliance, and the wholesome democratic faith of the frontier; from his mother, idealism, extreme delicacy of taste, musical appreciation, and noble poise.

At college, Thomas devoted himself to his books, studying fifteen hours a day, and allowing himself just time to run a mile out of town each evening for necessary exercise. "Three things," he said, "became a passion with me—mathematics, music, architecture." He played the violin skillfully, often practicing three hours a day during his busy student life.

After two years' study, he was graduated from college. All his life he was a constant reader,—studious, reflective, inquisitive, liberal-minded. He collected fine and rare books until his library became one of the largest, most excellent, and most complete in America.

A CHAMPION OF JUSTICE

THE next five years, 1762-67, Thomas Jefferson spent studying law in the office of George Wythe, one of the most brilliant attorneys of the Virginia bar. His great knowledge of law, which he acquired at this time, was shown later in the reform of the code of laws of Virginia, in his diplomatic correspondence in France, and in his messages as Secretary of State. In his youth he laid the foundation upon which he built his great career.

He was admitted to the bar in 1767, at the age of twenty-four, and practiced law for seven years.

On his twenty-first birthday, Jefferson became master of his father's estate and celebrated the event with planting an avenue of trees at Shadwell. He was an ideal figure for a southern planter, tall, lithe, athletic, and passionately fond of his horses and broad acres. He assumed the duties of a country squire, became justice of the peace and a vestryman of the parish.

IN HIS COUNTRY'S SERVICE

IN 1768, at the age of twenty-five, Jefferson was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses. This marked the beginning of his public life, which lasted for forty years. With absolute devotion to his state and country, he resolved "never to engage, while in public office, in any kind of enterprise for the improvement of my fortune." Needless to add, he kept his resolution.

HOME AT MONTICELLO

JEFFERSON'S home, "Shadwell," burned to the ground in the mid-winter of 1770. Nothing was saved but his violin. A new mansion, which he had already

begun on his favorite hilltop, where he used to sit and read and dream as a boy, was hastily completed. He called it "Monticello," the Italian for "little mountain." This home, built wholly from Jefferson's own plans, and partly with his own hands, is still standing, one of the treasures of our colonial architecture.

On New Year's Day, 1772, Jefferson brought to Monticello as his bride Mrs. Martha Skelton, a childless widow of twenty-three. She brought to him forty thousand acres of land and one hundred and thirty-five slaves. The land, however, was heavily mortgaged. A year after his marriage, Jefferson took into his home his widowed sister and her six children, whom he cared for and educated as though they were his own. Of his own six children only two, Martha and Mary, grew to womanhood. He was exceedingly fond of his two daughters. Mrs. Jefferson died in 1782.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

JEFFERSON presented a list of instructions to the delegates to the convention in Williamsburg in 1774 who met to appoint representatives to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. These instructions were afterward printed under the title, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*. Although they were then designated as "too bold for the present state of things," with a later *Reply to Lord North* they formed the basis of Jefferson's immortal *Declaration of Independence*.

From this time, the call of his country kept him almost a stranger to Monticello. He became altogether a public servant, protesting to the day of his release from the Presidency, thirty-five years later, that he would have

laid down high office any moment for the joy of returning to his estate.

Jefferson was sent as an alternative to the Second Continental Congress which had opened in Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, May 10, 1775. He arrived on June 20, "just in time to see George Washington set out for Cambridge to take command of the first American Army." He was now thirty-two years old, the youngest man, except two, in the Congress. With John Dickinson, he wrote the famous *Declaration on the Colonists Taking Up Arms*, emphasizing that "our cause is just, our union is perfect," and "resolving rather to die free than live slaves."

Jefferson resumed his seat in Congress in May, 1776. On June 11 he was elected to the first place on a committee chosen to draft a declaration of independence. Chosen with him were John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston; who, recognizing Jefferson's ability, turned over to him the task of writing the declaration. The document was presented to Congress; passed a "fiery ordeal of criticism," in which a few words were added at the suggestions of Adams and Franklin, and some passages were omitted; and finally, on July 4, it was accepted. It was signed first by John Hancock, President of the Congress, who "wrote his name where all nations should behold it and all time should not efface it."

The *Declaration* embodies the "equality of all men in the eyes of nature and the law, the unalienable rights of all to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the function of government as a guarantee of those rights, its just powers derived from the consent of the governed"—the

principles upon which our democracy is founded. Jefferson came to Congress an educated, true-hearted lover of his country; he left it famous as long as America and freedom shall endure.

LAWGIVER TO VIRGINIA

JEFFERSON was reëlected to Congress, but feeling the need of reformed legislation in his native state, declined. To him goes the credit for establishing within Virginia the most advanced, revolutionary, and democratic laws then known to man. He loved the people and hated class distinction of any kind. His first blow at the old aristocracy of wealth, "to make an opening for the aristocracy of virtue and talent," was the abolition of the laws of entail and primogeniture.

In June, 1779, Jefferson presented his world-renowned bill for religious freedom in Virginia, which was debated for seven years before it was finally adopted in 1786. The English Established Church held sway in Virginia; everyone was required to pay money for its support. Dissenters, or those opposed to the Church, were often persecuted. Virginia, in adopting Jefferson's resolution, was the first sovereign state in Christendom that formally proclaimed in its laws the absolute religious freedom of every one of its citizens. This principle of religious freedom was introduced into the Constitution of the United States by the first Amendment.

Two projects which Jefferson particularly cherished were doomed to defeat. One provided for the abolition of slavery; the other, a general system of education, called for the institution of primary and secondary schools all over the state. Writing nearly fifty years

later, Jefferson says, "Nothing is more clearly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free." His education bills were not passed until 1796, and then "only so much as provided for elementary schools," which could be established or not as each county chose. Quite naturally, few schools were founded. While Jefferson was the first great advocate of a democratic nation where *the people* rule, he believed most firmly in an *educated people*.

GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

THOMAS JEFFERSON was inaugurated Governor of Virginia in June, 1779, to succeed Patrick Henry, her first Governor; and served until June, 1781, when he was succeeded by General Thomas Nelson. During his term of service the battleground of the Revolutionary War was transferred to the South. Jefferson was not a great soldier, but he did all in his power to raise a defensive militia.

On June 7, 1781, Washington wrote to him: "Allow me, before I take leave of your Excellency in your public capacity, to express the obligations I am under for the readiness and zeal with which you have always forwarded and supported every measure which I have had occasion to recommend through you, and to assure you that I shall esteem myself honored by a continuation of your friendship and correspondence."

MINISTER TO FRANCE

HE returned to Congress in 1783, and served until the following May. From his pen came the reply which the President of Congress made to Washington

when he resigned as Commander-in-Chief of the army. He helped to establish our present system of coinage, doing away with the English pounds, shillings, and pence, and drafted an *Ordinance for the Government of the Western Territory of the United States*.

In 1784, Congress appointed Jefferson minister plenipotentiary, with Mr. Adams and Doctor Franklin, to negotiate treaties of commerce with foreign nations. He sailed July 5, and joined Franklin in Paris. The next year he was appointed sole minister to France.

THE FATHER OF DEMOCRACY

JEFFERSON took his place as Secretary of State in Washington's Cabinet in New York, then a city of thirty-five thousand and the seat of the National Government, on March 21, 1790. He objected severely to the policies of Alexander Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury. It was soon evident that there were two factions in American politics. Jefferson became the father of the Republican (later Democratic) party in opposition to Alexander Hamilton and his followers, who made up the Federalist party. Jefferson resigned from the cabinet in 1793; but by his reports to Congress on the currency, the fisheries, weights and measures, and through his correspondence with foreign ministers, he had placed his department on a level with foreign offices of older nations.

Back at Monticello, Jefferson spent his efforts in organizing the Republican (now Democratic) party of which he was the acknowledged founder. Many were those who differed with him and who denounced his political beliefs. But he rose above all efforts to crush

him. His will was firm. It has been remarked of him that "he never abandoned a plan, a principle, or a friend." He had faith in the people. "To educate the mass of the people, on whom the hope of continued freedom must depend, so that they should be increasingly capable of supervising and controlling their governors, seemed to Jefferson the sublimest mission of the republic." He undertook to educate and organize his followers with all the enthusiasm of his democratic faith. The skill and diligence with which he organized the Democratic party has been recognized by his friends and foes alike.

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

ON March 4, 1797, Jefferson became Vice-President of the United States with John Adams as President. In this capacity he served as President of the Senate and compiled a Manual of Parliamentary Practice, which has ever since been the standard by which the proceedings of legislative bodies in this country are regulated.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

UP to this time many of the ceremonies, fashions, and titles of European courts had surrounded the Chief Executive and the Congress. The President, who was always addressed as "Your Excellency," drove in a splendid coach and six with footmen and guards about him. When Thomas Jefferson, the great leader of Democracy, was inaugurated the Third President of the United States on March 4, 1801, tradition says he rode to the Capitol unattended, in a plain suit of clothes, hitched his horse to the fence, entered the Senate Chamber and read his address. Thus simple, indeed, was the man who wished ever to be known as "the friend of the people."

He at once made important changes in all matters of etiquette and form, abolishing levees, titles, and state ceremonies, and making himself more accessible to the people. There was nothing coarse about the "Jeffersonian simplicity"—he was a man of "rare accomplishments and fine tastes, a scholar, musician, and diplomat." The soul of hospitality, he kept in the White House an open table at which his guests were cheered by good fare and charmed with brilliant conversation.

During Jefferson's administration, Ohio was admitted to the Union as the seventeenth State. President Jefferson recommended the reduction of the Army and the Navy; lessened internal taxes; and established the first sinking fund, the setting aside each year by the Government of a sum to pay off the public debt. A naturalization law was passed, requiring aliens to be residents of the United States five years instead of fourteen before they could become citizens. Also, a national law was passed prohibiting the importation of slaves after January 1, 1808.

Two other services—the restraint of the Barbary Pirates and the great territorial expansion resulting from the Louisiana Purchase—deserve special consideration. Although the United States had paid ransom money and tribute to the pirates on the Barbary coast all through the administrations of Washington and Adams, Jefferson refused to pay an increase in our tribute of eighty-three thousand dollars to the Bashaw of Tripoli, who, on being refused, declared war on the United States by chopping down the flagpole in front of the American consulate. Jefferson sent several expeditions

to punish these pirates, and after four years made the Mediterranean safe for our commerce and trade.

Perhaps Jefferson's greatest service as President was the Louisiana Purchase—the buying, on April 30, 1803, of the entire Mississippi Valley, from the Allegheny to the Rocky Mountains, from France for \$15,000,000. Thirteen states have been carved out of this territory; the farm property alone in them is now worth over sixteen billion dollars, or more than a thousand times the value of the purchase. Through Jefferson's influence Congress voted twenty-five hundred dollars to send an "intelligent officer" to explore "even to the Western Ocean." The Lewis and Clark Expedition resulted, marking the first recorded passage of white men across the northern part of what is now the United States. Jefferson realized that the states must expand westward and in fancy already saw a great America reaching from ocean to ocean.

Jefferson was elected for a second term as President, with an overwhelming majority.

Because England and France were now at war and each persisted in capturing American vessels, accusing them of carrying aid to the enemy, Jefferson passed the Embargo Act, which forbade American vessels to leave port. Our commerce was severely crippled. Peace at sea did not come until after the war of 1812. In 1809, Jefferson's term ended; his friend and disciple, James Madison, was elected to succeed him.

IN RETIREMENT AT MONTICELLO

AT sixty-five years of age, Jefferson retired to Monticello, where his daughter Martha (Mrs. Thomas

Mann Randolph), who had the "Jefferson temperament—all music and sunshine"—with her eleven children presided over the hospitable home.

A beloved statesman, a friend of the people, a famous scholar and politician, and a distinguished scientist widely known for his contributions to scientific periodicals, he was honored and visited by celebrities from all over the world. In the midst of this loving company, he would not allow his guests to rob him of the hours he devoted to work at his desk, in his library, or on his farm. He still rose early. He said that the sun had not for fifty years caught him in bed. He carried on an amazingly large correspondence (sixteen thousand of his letters are preserved to this day), and wielded a great influence on all political and social questions of his time.

One of the most industrious of men, he taught his offspring: "Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain of the want of time, who never loses any. It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing."

FATHER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

TO "promote popular education as an essential condition to the safety of the republic," he established at Charlottesville the University of Virginia—doubtless at that time the most liberal institution of learning in the world. Jefferson gave money; superintended the construction of buildings; selected the professors (there was no president; the professors were equal in rank and managed details for themselves); prescribed the course of study, which was almost wholly elective, and from 1819 until his death in 1826 served as Rector of the Board of Visitors.

HIS LAST DAYS

JEFFERSON was too fond of experiments and fancy improvements and too often away from his lands to be practically successful as a farmer. His household expenses were heavy and he found himself practically bankrupt. When the public buildings in Washington were burned by the British in 1814, he offered to Congress his dearly-prized library of some thirteen thousand volumes, which he had been collecting for fifty years, for a little less than twenty-four thousand dollars, about half its original value. This sum, however, brought only temporary relief. When his friends in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore heard of his circumstances they presented him with about eighteen thousand dollars. He was greatly touched by this "pure and unsolicited offering of love."

He retained his vigor of mind and body to the last. When eighty-one years old, he not only mounted his horse without assistance, but dismounting at a fence breast-high, would leap over it by only placing his hand on the topmost rail. Until he was eighty-two he rode daily for ten miles.

Death came on July 4, 1826, fifty years to the day from the signing of his epoch-making document, the *Declaration of Independence*. John Adams, then in his ninety-first year, died a few hours later on the same day at Quincy, Mass., with the words "Thomas Jefferson still lives" on his lips. Although he had already passed into life immortal, Jefferson still lives and will live as long as liberty-loving America shall endure.

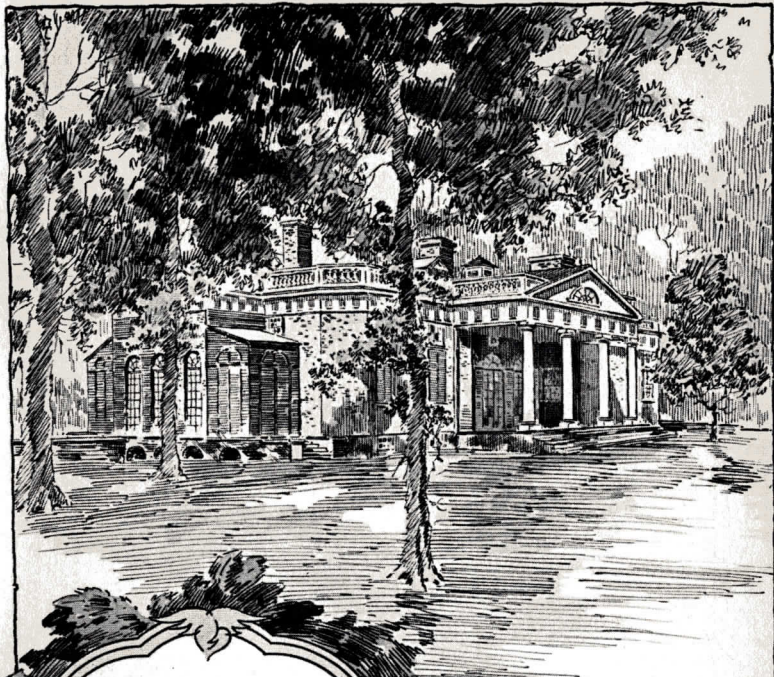
Among his papers was found a sketch of a granite

stone which he desired for his monument, with these words to be inscribed upon it,

Here was buried
THOMAS JEFFERSON
Author of the *Declaration of Independence*
Of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom
And Father of the University of Virginia

The last letter penned by Jefferson's aged hand was a summons to his countrymen to renew with "undiminished devotion" their faith in the rights of man and the blessings of self-government. "Freedom was the text of his life: 'I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.' Freedom was the burden of his labors: 'I will endeavor to keep attention fixed on the main object of all science, the freedom and happiness of man.'"

Jefferson gave nobly of the affection of his heart and the power of his intellect; and he received, as he deserved, the love and honor of thousands at home and abroad. Today in all parts of the world, wherever the story of America is told, the name Thomas Jefferson is synonymous with democracy—a great, free democracy, where all men share alike in the joys of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Jefferson would crush no man for the sake of another's gain; but through learning and liberty he would lift every being to the highest plane of human happiness.



MONTICELLO
Albemarle County
Virginia

the home of Thomas Jefferson. This home, built wholly from Jefferson's own plans, and partly with his own hands, is still standing, one of the treasures of our colonial architecture.





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